

Statement to the California Performance Review

Presented by:

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Issue Areas:

Duplicate, Inefficient & Inconsistent Administration

“Improve effectiveness and accountability of education programs”

Madam Co-Chair Kozberg, Co-Chair Hauck, and other members of the CPR Commission. First, I want to commend the Commission for taking this important step in forwarding the efficiency and effectiveness of our education system.

Keep the Governor in Charge

In terms of specific recommendations regarding the CPR, I support the voters view in this state and in other states that the Governor is ultimately accountable for the performance of schools and in improving student achievement. There are others in this room like co-chairman Bill Hauck who is far more knowledgeable and experienced in the impact of an aligned educational system from governor to student than I'll ever be.

And that is not why I was asked to speak with you. I have been invited today to speak about student achievement and educational accountability.

We have enormous challenges ahead of us to bring all k-12 students to academic proficiency over the next 10 years in reading, math and other core content areas. This includes the Hispanic kids, African American kids, white kids, English language learners, poor kids and all others.

Success requires an unprecedented urgency and focus by the adults of our state. Failure is not an option as our workforce for tomorrow depends upon their success today.

We Have Enough Money To Get the Job Done

I'm probably the only one today who will tell you that raising student achievement in California is not dependent upon spending more money. We now have world-class standards in place, and an assessment and accountability system that has been steady for three years. More money has been spent on instructional materials to teach to the standards over the last 5 years than ever before. Since 2001 there has

been a 33% increase in Federal Title 1 funding to assist with the education of poor children in the state.

Focus On Academic Results Instead of Organizations

The solutions do not reside within adult bureaucratic and special interest group processes. We must change our focus from rhetoric to results -- meaning academic proficiency in reading, math and other core subjects. It's simple. Parents have kids in our classrooms today. These kids do not have a shelf life. There is no time for getting ready. We must act swiftly and with purpose and high expectations.

The good news is the solutions for success are out there and we know where they are.

We work with teachers and principals every day and it always comes down to one simple thing. These committed teachers need strategies on how they can be more successful teaching our academically and socially challenged children and helping these students gain the academic skills promised to them through public education. They welcome help from wherever they can get it and the help they need is not far away.

In every corner of this state, there are high performing and high improving schools who are reducing achievement gaps overcoming the challenges of English language acquisition, poverty, disparate starting points and other social challenges. By connecting teachers, principals and administrators to those who are having greater academic success, educators begin to see and understand what high performing districts, schools and classrooms look like and their success follows. Teachers don't need government agencies and state departments to do this. They need access to the tools of the 21st century: telephones, the Internet, cars and tennis shoes for them to visit and learn from schools that are working.

A System is Already Built

Resources need not be poured into state bureaucracies seeking to provide schools with cumbersome data and reporting systems. Thanks to committed business, education and community leaders, we actually have a data and school improvement system built already. And this largest database of longitudinally linked student level records and Best Practice research was created at no cost to

California taxpayers. More importantly, it is offered to teachers, parents and the community free of charge so that they can make sound educational decisions. I'll say it again, it's free and it's built.

Now, we need to get busy and use it.

Connect Teachers To Successful Schools

Raising student achievement need not be a mysterious enterprise. It's hard work, but also the most rewarding when successful. Using achievement data and the Internet, we can now identify those who are succeeding in high performing schools and classrooms that are overcoming common challenges and excuses in raising achievement. We can easily discover the successful strategies they use, and get them into the hands of teachers and principals who need them most.

Connecting our teachers and principals to high performing schools and classrooms, right in their own neighborhoods with students who look just like theirs, is working. This process of school improvement should serve as the foundation for our state's accountability system.

These teachers and principals who are succeeding in raising student achievement and reducing achievement gaps overcoming the challenges and excuses of failure need a voice. Their brains need to be picked and their results need to be exploited. We need to turn our high performing schools into teaching hospitals. By doing so, we can transcend the bureaucratic and adult agendas and focus on rapidly getting all students to academic proficiency so that they can be prepared for their future.